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SUBJECT: TFH01: 11/27 HUMAN RIGHTS CASES - GRADIS DEATH AND
EGUIGURE DETENTION

¶1. (U) Summary. The body of Luis Gradis Espinal, a resistance coordinator, was found in Tegucigalpa on November 23. Human rights organizations alleged that police may have been involved in the kidnapping and killing of Gradis, however police believe the murder resulted from an armed robbery. According to the police, Gradis operated a loan business; they said he had been carrying large sum of money at the time of his disappearance. Feminist activist Merly Eguigure was detained in Tegucigalpa on November 26 by police who allege they found evidence tying Eguigure to acts of vandalism. Post expressed concern about the detention of Eguigure to the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights on November 27. End Summary.

The Death of Luis Gradis Espinal

¶2. (U) The Committee for the Family of the Detained and Disappeared (COFADEH) issued a press release on November 24 about a number of allegations of human rights violations. Included in the document is the case of the death of Luis Gradis Espinal. The COFADEH statement says that on November 22 Luis Gradis Espinal traveled from the Department of Valle to Tegucigalpa and that there are allegations that Gradis was detained by police and military near the ring road in Tegucigalpa on November 22. The COFADEH report also described Gradis as a coordinator of the anti-coup resistance movement in southern Honduras. Poloff spoke November 27 with Bertha Oliva, the president of COFADEH, who said that her organization was working to identify eye witnesses to the alleged detention but that as of November 27 they had been unable to locate the person that was in the car with Gradis at the time of his disappearance. Oliva said she was unaware of the source of the allegation that police or military were involved.

¶3. (U) Honduran Bureau of Federal Investigation (DNIC) spokesman, Commissioner Felix Maldonado, told an Embassy employee on November 27 that they believe unknown perpetrators kidnapped Gradis on November 22 and that his body was found the next day in Tegucigalpa. Police believe that this was a robbery, because Gradis operated a loan business and allegedly was carrying a large sum of money that was not on his person when his body was found.

Detention of Merly Eguigure

¶4. (U) The executive director of the Center for the Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights (CIPRODEH), Reina Rivera, called Poloff on November 27 to report the detention of feminist activist Merly Eguigure on November 26. Rivera

said that Eguigure, an activist with the feminist organization, "Visitation Padilla," was detained along with two co-workers in the evening hours of November 26 at a restaurant in Tegucigalpa located at the corner of Los Proceres Avenue and the road that leads to the town of Valley of Angeles. Poloff spoke to Gido Eguigure, the brother of Merly Eguigure, who said that Eguigure was detained because police believed paint found in her car had been used for vandalism and graffiti. Eguigure's brother told Poloff that the paint found in her car had been used at a public event to simulate blood in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

¶15. (U) Poloff spoke to the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights on November 27 to express concern about the detention of Eguigure. Ponce said she had visited Eguigure the morning of November 27 and reported that Eguigure is being held in good conditions, that police believe they have sufficient evidence to tie Eguigure to vandalism, and that she has had access to a lawyer. Ponce told Poloff she believed that Eguigure would go before a judge on November 27 or 28.

¶16. (U) Honduran Bureau of Federal Investigation (DNIC) spokesman, Commissioner Felix Maldonado, told an Embassy employee on November 27 that acting on an anonymous call, police located Eguigure and two co-workers at a restaurant in Tegucigalpa and found what police believe to be evidence tying them to vandalism.

LLORENS